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Thursday, 31 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

First reading (continued)

Section 5. Disarmament

Section 6. Special political questions; regional cooperation;
trusteeship and decolonization

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993
(continued) (A/46/6/Rev.1, A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/16 and Add.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 5. Disarmament

1. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that most of the growth proposed for section 5 was due to the proposed establishment of a P-5 post for the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific at Kathmandu, Nepal. Another area of concern was the proposed reclassification of three posts (A/46/6/Rev.1, paras. 5.20 and 5.21). The third issue was one of general methodology: the subvention for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) was presented as a non-recurrent expenditure, even though it had already been repeatedly funded from the regular budget. The reasoning was that increased efforts to attract more voluntary contributions for the Institute would soon obviate the need for the subvention. In any case, the problem would automatically be resolved in future budgets if the distinction between recurrent and non-recurrent expenditures was eliminated, as had been discussed.

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, even under the present methodology, the subvention in question should have been regarded as recurrent. That would have made the rate of growth higher. On a more general level, ACABQ recommended in paragraph 5.11 of its report that the estimate for section 5 should be reduced by \$136,500. It agreed with the proposals regarding the establishment of the P-5 post at Kathmandu and the reclassification of the two General Service posts. However, it did not recommend acceptance of the proposed reclassification from P-4 to P-5 of the post of administrative officer of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. He wished once again to stress that every effort should be made to encourage donors of "tied" contributions to make a supplemental unrestricted contribution which could be used to defray the cost of UNIDIR, as the Advisory Committee stated in paragraph 5.10 of its report (A/46/7).

3. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) said that, while there was no doubt about either the precarious financial position of UNIDIR or the quality of its work, he was dismayed to note the continued subsidization of the Institute in the 1992-1993 proposed programme budget. Although the subvention was in fact granted on the basis of the Institute's statute, his delegation wished to point out that, under part IV of General Assembly resolution 44/201 B, the Secretary-General was requested to intensify his efforts to attract voluntary contributions to

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(Mr. Teirlinck, Belgium)

the Institute in order to obviate the need for a subvention from the regular budget, to review the question of programme support costs, and to report annually to the General Assembly on the situation of the Institute. Before deciding whether or not the subvention was justified, his delegation would like to see that report. It insisted, moreover, that the same request should be included in the draft resolution on the proposed programme budget to be submitted to the General Assembly at the current session.

4. Mr. COHEN (United States) said that his delegation would appreciate the Secretariat's views on how the changes in East-West relations would affect the activities of the Department for Disarmament Affairs during the biennium 1992-1993. He hoped that a revised work programme and budget reflecting those changes would be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

5. As his delegation had indicated during the general debate, it did not believe that the issuance of large numbers of publications was an effective use of resources. Noting that the Department for Disarmament Affairs planned to issue some 60 recurrent and non-recurrent publications, he said that it would be more useful to redeploy resources devoted to publications to the fellowship programme, other advisory services and, if necessary, the work of the Regional Centres. In that connection, his delegation was not prepared to support the new P-5 post at the Regional Centre in Nepal if, as ACABQ indicated in paragraph 5.5 of its report, it was not explicitly authorized by the General Assembly. If the Centre required a P-5 post, it should be provided through redeployment.

6. With respect to the proposed upgrading to the P-5 level of the post of administrative officer of the Department, the report of ACABQ did not provide any details to support its opposition to that proposal. His delegation would appreciate an explanation from the Chairman of ACABQ and would ask the Secretariat to inform the Fifth Committee whether its proposal was based on the job classification standards established by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

7. With reference to General Assembly resolution 44/201, in which the Secretary-General was requested to intensify his efforts to attract voluntary contributions to UNIDIR and to review the question of programme support costs, he said he would appreciate a full report from the Secretariat on efforts to resolve those matters. As his delegation had repeatedly stated, the United States did not believe that the regular budget of the United Nations should provide subventions to voluntary programmes that did not arouse enough interest to attract voluntary contributions. As long as marginal programmes like the Institute continued to be funded through the regular budget, there was no justification for providing additional resources to the United Nations.

8. Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal) said that the contribution made by the Regional Centres, including the Centre at Kathmandu, in promoting understanding and cooperation on disarmament could not be overemphasized. Because they required financial viability and stability to operate effectively, those Centres should be financed from the regular budget, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report. The P-5 post for the Director of the Regional Centre at Kathmandu was the bare minimum required for the Centre to carry out its activities, and he was confident that the Committee would approve its funding.

9. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that the February 1991 seminar organized in Vienna by the Department for Disarmament Affairs had had an important impact in building confidence and increasing security the world over. The end of the cold war and the recent events in the Gulf had brought a growing recognition of the importance of disarmament and, with it, an increase in the workload of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Under those circumstances, the proposed 0.6 per cent rate of real growth, which was below the projected overall increase of 0.9 per cent, was highly justified. She was concerned that a reduction in its appropriations of \$136,500 might adversely affect the work of the Department, and she looked forward to further information on that subject from the Secretariat.

10. The proposed reclassification of the post of administrative officer from P-4 to P-5 reflected the workload of the Department and was fully justified. With respect to the establishment of a P-5 post for the Director of the Nepal Centre, assistance to the Regional Centres was part of a high priority subprogramme, and her delegation believed that the post should be funded in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/117 F and the recommendation of ACABQ. Finally, she wished to stress the importance of the World Disarmament Campaign, which had increased interest in disarmament.

11. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that, although he understood that the issue of reclassification would be taken up later, he would like to know why ACABQ did not recommend acceptance of the proposed reclassification of the post of administrative officer of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. No reason was given in its report.

12. Mr. MORDACQ (France) said that his delegation attached great importance to UNIDIR, which was the only scientific research organization in the field of disarmament and a necessary complement to the excellent work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. While his delegation agreed with ACABQ that the Institute should eventually become financially independent, it still required subsidization from the regular budget. In 1992, France had increased its contribution by 20 per cent, and he hoped that other countries would do the same.

13. As his delegation wished to discuss the issue of across-the-board savings based on unliquidated balances in informal meetings, it would reserve its comments on that subject for a later date.

14. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said he believed that the increase in bilateral disarmament, encouraged by the improvement in international relations, would be followed by an increase in multilateral disarmament. As the representative of the United States had stated, the probable growth of disarmament activities should be reflected in future appropriations under section 5. While his delegation concurred with the view of ACABQ that efforts should be intensified to replace the subvention from the regular budget with voluntary contributions, the subvention was currently still needed.

15. With respect to the establishment of a P-5 post for the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament at Kathmandu to take effect from 1 January 1992, he said that, since the Secretariat and ACABQ disagreed as to whether or not that measure was mandated by General Assembly resolution 44/117 F, his delegation would like clarification regarding the terms of the resolution. As for the proposed upgrading of the post of administrative officer, he said that that post not only entailed very important responsibilities, but also exercised supervision over the Directors of the Regional Centres, who were themselves at the P-5 level. The post ought therefore to be at least at that level. For those reasons, he did not understand why ACABQ had rejected the reclassification. In other respects, his delegation supported the recommendations of ACABQ.

16. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) supported the establishment of a P-5 post at Kathmandu, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 44/117 F. There was growing recognition that global disarmament efforts needed to be supplemented by regional efforts, which were often more effective, and it was necessary to ensure that the Regional Centres enjoyed financial viability and stability.

17. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that, before authorizing the cut in appropriations for disarmament recommended by ACABQ, the Committee should analyse the recommendations carefully. The Department for Disarmament Affairs was not only one of the more effective bodies of the United Nations; it was also involved in a priority activity in which the workload was increasing, and it was the duty of the Committee to ensure that it received the support it needed.

18. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation looked forward to informal discussions on the question of the subvention to UNIDIR. In that connection, it welcomed the statement by the representative of France, as well as the questions regarding the establishment of a P-5 post at Kathmandu. With respect to regular budget funding of the posts of Directors of the Regional Centres, he thought that General Assembly resolutions 40/151, 40/160 and 42/38 should also be taken into account.

19. Like others, his delegation looked forward to clarifications from ACABQ on a number of issues. While the requests for further explanations seemed to imply a need for a more extensive report, he pointed out that the report of ACABQ already far exceeded the usual 32-page limit. The question of how much detail was necessary should be dealt with in informal meetings. That was also

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(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

the best forum for discussing the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC).

20. Referring to the statement by ACABQ in paragraph 5.8 of its report that disarmament studies were perennial in nature, he said that, while he understood that those studies might continue at a regular volume, they obviously did not always relate to the same aspect of disarmament. He would appreciate clarification from ACABQ on that subject.

21. Mr. RAE (India) said that his delegation attached the greatest importance to disarmament, which was closely related to one of the five priority areas for United Nations activities. It was important, however, that its management should be cost-effective and efficient and that the legislative mandates should be accurately implemented. He had found no reference to any specific date in General Assembly resolution 44/117 F, which was referred to in paragraph 5.19 of the proposed programme budget as the mandate for the establishment of a P-5 post for the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. It was not clear from paragraph 5.5 of the Advisory Committee's report why the Committee had not objected to the creation of that new post. He agreed with the United States representative that the proposal was not adequately justified in the programme budget. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's decision, in paragraph 5.6, not to recommend acceptance of the proposed reclassification of the post of administrative officer.

22. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation associated itself with others which had expressed satisfaction with the work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. His delegation was always supportive of any effort to enhance the indigenous capacity of the developing countries. It was therefore particularly interested in subprogramme 4: Assistance to developing countries on disarmament issues: regional centres; fellowship; training and advisory services. It was, however, not very satisfied with the proposals in the programme budget in regard to fellowships (para. 5.34). In CPC, a number of delegations had expressed appreciation of the fellowship programme and suggested that it should be strengthened (A/46/16, para. 105). His delegation, which had seen that programme at work, was convinced of its usefulness. He hoped that a way could be found through the informal consultations to enhance the programme and increase the number of fellowships.

23. His delegation also attached great importance to the role of the regional centres and therefore supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 5.5 of its report. He asked whether the Secretariat could give the Committee an indication of the current level of support for each regional centre and how it varied from the proposed programme budget. He would also welcome some clarification regarding the differing interpretations of General Assembly resolution 44/117 F as reflected in paragraph 5.19 of the programme budget and 5.5 of the Advisory Committee's report.

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24. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that his delegation also attached special importance to the work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. As a result of recent welcome international developments, the Department's workload had greatly increased and the proposed 0.6 per cent increase in its budget was far too little. The Department traditionally possessed one of the smallest bureaucracies in the Secretariat and a much larger increase would have been justified. The important activities of UNIDIR needed a sounder financial basis; subsidizing them through a non-recurrent budget provision was not an adequate solution.

25. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) agreed with the previous speaker on the importance of the Department's work. In particular, its efforts to codify bilateral and multilateral agreements on disarmament matters should be encouraged and given priority. He also endorsed the views expressed by the representatives of France and Morocco regarding the funding of UNIDIR. While his delegation had no objection in principle to the reclassification proposed in paragraph 5.20 of the programme budget, it would like the Secretariat to provide more details. It was unfortunate that CPC had not been able to discuss the matter. He endorsed the remarks of the United Kingdom representative on the need to take up the matter of the creation of posts in informal consultations.

26. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), referring to the financing of UNIDIR said that the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session had asked the Secretary-General to study the support costs charged by UNIDIR with a view to making the United Nations subsidy unnecessary and he wondered whether any report had been received on the subject. He believed that UNIDIR did not charge support costs for projects to donors' commitments. Projects funded from extrabudgetary resources were, however, usually charged with support costs of 13 per cent and UNIDIR should be encouraged to adopt the same approach.

27. Regarding the establishment of a P-5 post for the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, accepted by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 5.5 of its report, he noted that the work to be undertaken had been mandated by the General Assembly and that the Secretary-General had been requested to act "as soon as practicable". The situation in regard to disarmament was evolving rapidly and, even since the thirty-first session of CPC, there had been many developments in the field which would have an effect on regional disarmament activities. Disarmament was one of the priority areas, since it was closely related to the maintenance of peace and security, and his delegation felt that there was no need to be overcautious in a matter that related to clearly mandated activities.

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that in paragraph 5.5 of its report, the Advisory Committee in fact indicated that the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 5.19 of the proposed programme budget was factually incorrect: there was no mention in the resolution which was claimed as the legislative mandate for the creation of the post. In the same paragraph, however, ACABQ also reminded the Fifth Committee that the Assembly had been made aware of the

(Mr. Mselle)

intention to create the post through the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications. The Advisory Committee had therefore not objected to the request.

29. A number of representatives had pointed out that no reason was given in paragraph 5.6 of the Advisory Committee's report for its decision not to recommend acceptance of the proposed reclassification of the post of administrative officer. The Advisory Committee had listened to the arguments of the Secretary-General's representatives and had read paragraph 5.20 of the programme budget with care, noting the reference to the level of responsibility and the volume and complexity of extrabudgetary activities. One third of the Department's staffing table was already at the P-5 level. Unfortunately, the issue of reclassification was often used to mask personnel action for purposes of career development. Nevertheless, the problem was a real one for the Secretariat. Staff members sometimes found themselves tied to a particular post, with no prospect of moving to another post at a higher level and Departments were thus forced to resort to a request for reclassification of the post in question. He welcomed the opportunity that the forthcoming seminar would provide to discuss the whole question of reclassification, in particular whether a different approach could not be devised to what was really a matter of personnel management and career development.

30. In the case in point, the Advisory Committee had noted that the Department already had 10 P-5 posts and it had not been convinced that, given the Department's level of activity and total budget of \$20.9 million, the P-4 level was inadequate for the administrative officer post in question. If the individual concerned needed a promotion, the Secretariat could have dealt with it otherwise than through reclassification.

31. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), referring to the proposed reclassification of posts and the lack of appropriate justification mentioned by a number of speakers, said that CPC had noted, in its conclusions and recommendations on the introduction to the proposed programme budget, that some of the changes in the staffing table were insufficiently justified (A/46/16, para. 41). In paragraph 43 of its report, CPC recommended the development of simpler and more rational procedures and norms for reclassification. Clear workload standards would also be helpful.

32. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the question from the Belgian delegation, said that the Secretary-General issued a report each year on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters which was also the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR. The current report (A/46/334) included some information on the voluntary contributions of Member States to UNIDIR pledged and received. It did not, however, include details on support costs and similar issues. In the case of UNIDIR, it had been decided that a 5 per cent charge should be applied for support costs. There was no uniform policy with regard to voluntary contributions and efforts were

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(Mr. Baudot)

made to adjust to particular situations. With regard to the subsidy to UNIDIR, he hoped to be able, if the Committee so wished, to present a complete picture before long of the situation of all the autonomous institutes of the United Nations together with information as to whether or not they were subsidized from the regular budget.

33. In response to the questions asked by the United States delegation, he noted that, as indicated in paragraph 64 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/46/7), section 5 was one of the budget sections for which the programme of work for 1992-1993 had not been reviewed by a specialized body. The United Nations had not agreed upon a competent body to review the programme of work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which was derived from the medium-term plan and the mandates adopted each year by the General Assembly. At the next session of CPC, it would be possible to revise the plan, if the Secretary-General wished and any revisions would be presented to the General Assembly at its next session, through CPC. There was currently no mechanism for presenting revisions in the programme of work except through the medium of statements of programme budget implications. The creation of such a mechanism would imply involving CPC in the review of the changes proposed by the Secretary-General. The fact that there was no mechanism for systematically reflecting changes in programmes of work was one reason why the programme performance reports gave rise to so many complaints in the Fifth Committee. The Secretariat indicated changes in outputs, through which the Committee discovered that there had been fundamental changes in the activities outlined in the programme budget.

34. In response to the remarks about publications, he agreed that the Department for Disarmament Affairs issued a great many. They were the result of various mandates and were designed to reach particular developing countries. With regard to the effect of the across-the-board reduction for external printing proposed by the Advisory Committee, he noted that the Secretary-General was able to redeploy funds between budget sections through the Publications Board.

35. He had nothing further to add regarding the proposal for the establishment of a P-5 post for the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. While it was true that there was no date specified in the General Assembly resolution, the Secretary-General's view was that the post should be established to take effect from 1 January 1992.

36. Regarding the proposed reclassification of posts, he assured the United States delegation that the Office of Human Resources Management had used ICSC standards. Even if the procedure had been used to solve an individual problem, as suggested by the Chairman of ACABQ, it demonstrated that the problem existed. The ossified job structure of the Secretariat could lead to a perversion of the reclassification process, but the results were in many cases legitimate. The Secretariat was extremely anxious that the CPC

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(Mr. Baudot)

recommendations in that connection should be fully implemented and looked forward to discussing the issue further.

37. With regard to the important question of "perennial" items, for instance the studies on various aspects of disarmament referred to in paragraph 5.22 of the proposed programme budget, he said that the Secretariat was trying a different approach to the question of studies that were required by the General Assembly every year, so that the First Committee would not have to receive a statement of programme budget implications with each request for a new study.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusion and recommendation of CPC regarding section 5 (A/46/16, para. 107).

39. It was so decided.

40. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, an appropriation of \$13,448,900 under section 5 for the biennium 1992-1993 was adopted in first reading, on the understanding that the Committee would hold informal consultations on the issues raised with respect to section 5 and that any necessary adjustments would be made.

41. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium), speaking on a point of clarification with regard to the appropriation for UNIDIR, said that, after consulting the documentation which had just been made available to him, it appeared that the report requested from the Secretary-General under General Assembly resolution 44/201 B, part IV, had still not been provided. The request made by his delegation in its earlier statement therefore remained valid.

Section 6. Special political questions; regional cooperation; trusteeship and decolonization

42. The CHAIRMAN said that the total estimates proposed by the Secretary-General under section 6 amounted to \$9,765,400.

43. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the revised estimates under section 6 requested by CPC would be available shortly.

44. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on section 6, said that the Fifth Committee might wish to proceed with its consideration of the section pending receipt of the revised estimates, which could be reviewed and reported on by the Advisory Committee before the second reading.

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(Mr. Mselle)

45. In paragraph 6.4 of its report, the Advisory Committee reiterated its recommendation that the criteria used in exempting certain trust funds from support cost charges should be reviewed, with a view to ensuring that the regular budget did not bear an undue share of the costs of providing support services for such extrabudgetary-funded activities. The Advisory Committee would submit a report in due course on the United Nations Trust Fund for Namibia, which, in general terms, would indicate that sufficient resources were available to complete activities under that programme.

46. In paragraph 6.8, the Advisory Committee asked the Secretariat to ensure that activities were reoriented to reflect the current realities of decolonization. In paragraph 6.11, the Advisory Committee recommended against approval of the Secretary-General's request for the conversion of 12 temporary posts to established posts; that request was, however, now more valid given that revised estimates were to be submitted.

47. Concerning the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes, the Advisory Committee recommended (para. 6.12) that, pending the review, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, of the functions of the Unit to ensure that they did not duplicate activities carried out by other emergency relief agencies, the allocation of posts to the Unit should remain as approved at the forty-fifth session. In considering emergency relief, the Committee should bear in mind that the question was of system-wide concern. Lastly, he noted that the Advisory Committee had made recommendations relating to travel and consultancy services in paragraphs 6.10 and 6.13 respectively.

48. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that activities under section 6 of the proposed programme budget fell under both programme 4 and programme 37 of the medium-term plan. In CPC, some delegations had observed that activities under programme 37, subprogramme 4 (Special emergency programmes) were very similar to activities under budget sections 29 A (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) and 30 (Disaster relief operations). As CPC noted in its report (A/46/16, para. 109), fragmentation of activities and responsibilities for implementation of programmes should be avoided.

49. CPC recommended that the number and volume of activities should be adjusted to take account of changing requirements with regard to decolonization activities and that the programme narrative of section 6 should be revised to refer specifically to resolutions of the General Assembly and United Nations organs (A/46/16, para. 116). The revised estimates requested by CPC pertained to a different distribution of resources between subprogrammes within the section. The Fifth Committee might wish to continue its consideration of the section, pending completion of the revised estimates. CPC also recommended a review of the functions of the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes. Subject to those caveats, she recommended approval of the programme narrative for section 6.

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50. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that the United Nations continued to devote too large a share of its resources to outdated activities under section 6. Comments that the Organization lacked resources rang hollow in view of the allocations under that section. The Advisory Committee had reached a similar conclusion and his delegation fully supported its view that a determined effort should be made to reorient activities to reflect the current realities of decolonization (A/46/7, para. 6.8). He referred, for instance, to the provision for "missions of consultation" to the Organization of African Unity, despite the end to colonization in that country. CPC also agreed with the Advisory Committee, and had requested the Secretary-General to provide revised estimates.

51. Resources should be redeployed within the section to strengthen the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes, while fragmentation of responsibility and duplication of activities in the critical areas covered by section 6 should be eliminated. He requested an explanation of the role of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship with respect to good offices, fact-finding and analysis of specific political questions. Lastly, the resources proposed for the Special Committee of 24 were not warranted, in particular the amount of \$500,000 for travel. It was his delegation's understanding that many of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were satisfied with their current political arrangements and did not desire independence.

52. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda), noting the comment of the Advisory Committee (A/46/7, para. 6.5) that voluntary contributions raised for the scholarship programme for Namibian students would be sufficient to cover the activities of the programme until its completion, asked whether the funds in question had actually been received or merely pledged. He would welcome an assurance that any shortfall would be met from the regular budget.

53. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said he was surprised that, notwithstanding the progress made in decolonization, section 6 appeared to be a case of business as usual. His delegation had still to be convinced that the estimates proposed were really necessary; it seemed that some redeployment was called for. He requested more detailed information in support of the estimates, and agreed that the Fifth Committee should take no action pending receipt of the revised estimates.

54. Mr. WIELAARD (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that the amount of work remaining to be done with regard to decolonization had been substantially reduced. That should have an impact on programmes of work. Some of the activities under section 6 were obsolete and should be reconsidered. The Twelve agreed with the Advisory Committee that the current realities of decolonization had not been reflected, as evidenced by the travel programme of the Special Committee of 24. All organizational units under section 6 should clearly demonstrate how their resources were to be utilized.

55. Mr. WU Gang (China) said that the amount proposed under section 6 for executive direction and management and support services was disproportionately high, and that more resources should be channelled into substantive programmes. Although the proposed programme budget listed only five posts under executive direction and management, an estimate of more than \$300,000 for travel had been included. His delegation questioned whether that amount was really needed. It also requested an explanation of how costs incurred in hiring consultants were calculated. His delegation endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendations for reductions in expenditure on travel and consultancy services. Since the emergency relief programmes under section 6 might duplicate activities under other sections, for example section 30 (Disaster relief operations), such activities should be transferred. He looked forward to the submission of revised estimates.

56. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that there appeared to be an inconsistency with regard to the figures relating to consultancy services under section 6, in that the Advisory Committee's report referred to an estimate of \$113,800 (A/46/7, para. 6.13) while the proposed programme budget (A/46/6/Rev.1, para. 6.19) referred to an amount of \$105,200. He would welcome an explanation. The Advisory Committee noted that total actual expenditure on consultancy services for the 1990-1991 biennium up to May 1991 had been \$24,000 and he asked for updated figures to enable the Committee to assess the validity of the reductions proposed by the Advisory Committee.

57. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that the Fifth Committee was a technical body which should not be concerned with the mandates of political organs. It was the view of the General Assembly that much remained to be done in the area of decolonization. The only issue before the Fifth Committee was whether enough resources were available to discharge the mandates authorized by the General Assembly. The Secretariat should inform the Committee whether resources had been requested which did not accord with a legislative mandate. If that was the case, his delegation would oppose the provision of such resources, but if that was not the case, the only task remaining was to determine the minimum amount needed to carry out the activities in question. In that connection, the concept of obsolete activities did not refer to activities which had been on the agenda of the General Assembly for a long time. His delegation would determine its position on section 6 on receipt of the revised estimates.

58. Mr. EL-DEEB (Egypt) said that, before taking any decision on appropriations for section 6, the Committee needed to know what resources actually existed or would become available for certain programmes. That applied particularly with respect to the United Nations Fund for Namibia and to the individual scholarship programme for Namibian students since, as indicated in General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, should there be a shortfall in funding, the Secretary-General would be authorized to enter into commitments under the regular budget. The Committee could not take it for granted that voluntary contributions would be sufficient, and reducing or cancelling appropriations could bring such activities to a standstill.

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(Mr. El-Deeb, Egypt)

59. Regarding the suggestions made to review so-called obsolete activities, he wished to emphasize that the main legislative organ had already adopted a resolution setting out overall priorities in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, and that one of those priorities was the economic recovery and development of Africa. The task of the Fifth Committee, as the organ dealing with administrative and budgetary questions, was to provide for execution of the legislative resolutions adopted by the General Assembly; it could not replace programmes without the Assembly's approval. The economic crisis in Africa called for further support of economic programmes for that continent and the United Nations would have to maintain its commitment until stability prevailed and other sources of funding were found. His delegation therefore reserved its position on the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee in section 6 pending submission of the revised estimates.

60. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina) said that, although positive developments had undoubtedly occurred in the process of decolonization, constituting one of the major achievements of the United Nations, that process was still some way from being completed. His delegation had recognized that programmes must reflect the changing situation when it had accepted the recommendations of CPC. It would await the revised estimates before taking a final position on resource allocation in section 6 and for the time being merely wished to state its view that proposals in the revised estimates should not have a negative impact on the Organization's ability to carry out mandated activities under subprogramme 2.

61. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community and welcomed the constructive comments made by other delegations. While accepting that the mandates of other legislative organs remained valid, even if they were voted mandates with which some delegations disagreed, the Fifth Committee, as the appropriate forum for consideration of administrative and budgetary questions, could legitimately examine the estimated workload requirements to implement those mandates in such a manner as to ensure that the estimates were adequate to the best of anyone's ability to foresee changes.

62. Section 6 of the proposed programme budget contained various workload indicators that would be helpful for such an exercise. Some of the workload statistics, such as the number of petitioners to be heard or the number of meetings to be held, appeared identical to those for the previous biennium. That was strange in view of the positive development of the independence of Namibia and the reasonable prospect that Western Sahara would not figure much longer on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The reductions in workload were either actual, as in the case of the Trusteeship Council (A/46/6/Rev.1, para. 6.9), or prospective, as in the case of Namibia, in respect of which the documentation submitted to the Committee at the previous session had shown that the residual programmes workload would decrease significantly after the end of 1992.

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(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

63. His comments were intended to help to establish a factual basis on which the Committee could make its decision. In regard to a section where there was still much to revise and where a review of the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes was outstanding, his delegation could see no justification for even a provisional decision in first reading, at least not until the Committee received the revised estimates requested by CPC and promised by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division.

64. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), replying to the question put by the representative of Morocco, said that the requirements for consultancy services indicated in table 6.4 of the proposed programme budget referred to a 1990-1991 appropriation of \$158,900 reduced by \$53,700 so that the resources requested under that heading at 1990-1991 rates were \$105,200. The same figure appeared in paragraph 6.19 of the Secretary-General's submission and was equivalent to \$113,800 at 1992-1993 rates. It was in respect of the latter estimate that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$58,800.

65. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) observed that most of the comments and questions raised in the discussion had been of a general nature - whether the resources requested by the Secretary-General were adequate, barely sufficient or too generous - and thus reflected one of the main functions of the Committee, namely to examine the relationship between proposed resources and the activities mandated by the General Assembly. Section 6, particularly as it dealt with political matters, illustrated some of the crucial problems involved in formulating a budget, such as how much allowance could be made for probable but not certain changes. The Secretariat's traditional approach was one of prudence. It took into account the situation at the time the budget was being drawn up instead of trying to anticipate all possible future developments.

66. As the representative of the United Kingdom had rightly noted, many of the activities and proposed resources - and, of course, the corresponding workload indicators - were the same as for the current programme budget. However, it should be remembered that significant reductions had been made in the 1986-1987 biennium and much larger ones in the 1988-1989 biennium. He noted the United Kingdom representative's comments regarding workload indicators and agreed that the Secretariat needed to develop them further. Paradoxically, when the Secretariat did provide detailed indicators, the section became even more open to criticism than if it had confined itself to very general statements on the activities envisaged for the biennium ahead. That was not to say that workload indicators should not be discussed, and the revised estimates would certainly contain more precise and updated factual information to enable the Committee to form its views on the appropriations requested.

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(Mr. Baudot)

67. On the question of fragmentation raised both in the Committee and by CPC, in particular with regard to the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), it was pointed out in the introduction to the proposed programme budget that the proposals reflected existing structures. That was presented not as something either to be commended or deplored but simply as a fact. The proposed programme budget, in other words, was not conceived as an instrument for change, either in the Secretariat or in the structure of the intergovernmental bodies. The seminar proposed by CPC had already been given many subjects to discuss, including the question of reclassification, but it might be interesting to know what circumstances would make it possible for the programme budget to be used in future as an instrument for change.

68. In reply to the representative of Uganda, he could confirm that the amounts indicated for scholarships for Namibian students were sums received and not merely pledged. If difficulties arose in the implementation of the scholarship programme, the Secretary-General would inform the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee and commitments would accordingly be made under the regular budget, although that appeared more and more unlikely to be necessary.

69. In reply to the question put by the representative of China about the amount of the proposed appropriations for travel under executive direction and management, he said that the amount in question was linked in part to the good offices function. That explanation of the duality of functions also applied to the resources requested for consultancy services.

70. Lastly, in response to the United States representative's comments regarding the missions of consultation to OAU, he said he would endeavour to provide further information before the informal consultations began on the relevant part of section 6.

71. The CHAIRMAN, noting that several delegations had expressed a desire to await the revised estimates, asked whether the Committee wished to take any decision on section 6 at the current stage of the first reading.

72. Mr. GREGG (Australia) observed that the Committee had already deferred a decision on one budget section at the request of a delegation. Several delegations appeared to have problems with section 6 and his own was not in a position to accept the preliminary estimates.

73. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) agreed with the representative of Australia.

74. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) pointed out that the Committee had been following a procedure whereby individual sections could be accepted provisionally on the understanding that changes would be made in the light of additional information and informal consultations. He could see no reason to depart from that procedure in connection with section 6.

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75. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had indeed been following such a procedure but had also tried to show flexibility rather than applying strict rules. The wise course would perhaps be to give the Secretariat time to supply the revised estimates and other information requested on section 6.

76. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that his delegation would go along with the Chairman's suggestion and hoped that a similar flexibility would be shown in the consideration of other budget sections where necessary.

77. The CHAIRMAN announced that decisions on section 6 would be deferred to a later meeting, in the light of additional information to be provided.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.